

loyola of montreal

STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION
L'ASSOCIATION DES ETUDIANTS DE
LOYOLA DE MONTREAL

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6931 SHERBROOKE ST. W.,
MONTREAL 28, QUEBEC
482-9280

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STUDENT REPRESENTATION: PERSPECTIVE AND PROPOSAL

- prepared by the Loyola of Montreal Students' Association
- October 16, 1967

INTRODUCTION

In our preliminary paper, 'Representation: the Student Right and the Student Responsibility', we called for the formal participation of students within the structures of University Government at Loyola.

We argued that it was "... the duty of students, with a high degree of self-understanding, in collaboration with more experienced and mature members of society and the community, (to) chart, in part, the processes which best lead to a most meaningful education". *

We stated that our bid for representation "... should not be construed as an attempt at control of any sphere of decision-making. It is a natural attempt to voice student ideas and opinions and to foster the community's competence in policy and decision-making". *

We advocated that "... the community must work together, share roles, co-operate and communicate, if we are to achieve the aims and goals to which Loyola aspires". *

We would now like to present to you some of our thoughts, which follow from the many discussions we have had recently with members of the faculty and administration.

We would now like to outline our specific proposals for student representation in the hope of establishing effective communication and promoting the quality of the educational opportunities afforded by Loyola.

IN PERSPECTIVE

In our discussions, professors and administrators echoed continually three basic problems, questioning:

- a) the degree to which students would be representative
- b) the irresponsibility of students
- c) the lack of continuity as a result of an annual turnover of student representatives.

Firstly, many queried to what extent those students who would sit on the various academic and administrative bodies would be representative of the students at large. These representatives would exist in the student environment. They would be exposed continually to discussions with the students. They would therefore, to an extent, be knowledgeable of prevailing student attitudes. We feel that a structured form of participation will encourage and stimulate greater dialogue among students. Student opinion, channelled effectively, will lead to significant advances. In discussions, we received a near unanimous consent backing our assertion that student opinion is of tremendous value, and that the presentation of a wider spectrum of viewpoints is essential to the policy and decision-making process.

An educator must guide the student. More importantly, he must help the student to help himself. We believe that the student can contribute to this process.

Representation will lead to increased dialogue. As the students become aware of the avenue for communication, they will attempt to be heard, to contribute meaningfully; and will thereby assume a greater responsibility for their individual educational development. And this leads us to an often cited reason against the participation of students within the various structures of university government; that of irresponsibility.

Isolated cases of student irresponsibility stand out. But, for the most part, we stand to be judged. Judge us by our record of accomplishment within the Students' Association. Judge us in our work of providing a rich cultural, educational, and social program in recent years. Judge our efforts in effecting meaningful change in the academic and administrative spheres of Loyola. Judge our sincerity. Judge us on our mistakes, and the lessons we have learned. An informed and honest evaluation is your responsibility.

Informed discussion, frank dialogue, structured communication will lead to an increased acceptance of responsibility on the part of students; to an increased awareness of students in the importance and significance of their education. "We strongly feel that in selecting curriculum, in improving teaching methods, in promoting the very nature of an education environment, and indeed in discerning high educational standards, students can contribute fresh ideas, mature opinion, and through the art of compromise, arrive at decisions which best suit the interest of the community at large". *

With an annual turnover of student representatives, the problem of continuity looms before us. However, we do not feel, that it is necessary to have a long-time familiarity with the workings and procedures of University Government, to be successful in providing for an essential interchange of ideas and views, and in achieving the aim of mutually beneficial dialogue. The accomplishment of this end is the real problem which faces us.

OUR PROPOSALS

A. THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS

We propose that a joint committee on Student Affairs be formed, composed of three members of the Board of Governors and three members of the Students' Association.

The decisions which emanate from the Board of Governors necessarily affect the educational opportunities and conditions at Loyola.

This committee, we advocate, should exist as a standing committee of the Board, so that constructive criticism and thoughtful proposals will always be guaranteed an arena for debate.

One of the important areas for consideration of this committee should be a study to question the value of direct student representation to the Board.

Such a proposal, we feel, in no way infringes or questions the present policy formulation procedures, but on the contrary re-inforces the validity of each decision made.

B. THE SENATE

We propose that five students be seated as full members of Senate.

The nature of curriculum, the ratio of compulsory to elective courses, grading policy and procedures, attendance regulations, policies regarding student life, and the many areas for which the Senate is responsible, are all relevant and vital student concerns. Permitting the student a role in evaluating, criticizing, and formulating policies will unquestionably have beneficial effects on all sides.

The composition of student representatives would be:

- a) One member of the executive of the Students' Association.
- b) One member from the Board of Directors of the Students' Association.
- c) Three students (one Arts, one Commerce, one Science/Engineering) elected directly by the students in their respective faculties.

Effective representation within Senate requires, in our estimation, a minimum of five students which provides for a wide cross-section of opinion. We believe that one or two students cannot be adequately representative of the entire student body.

C. SENATE COMMITTEES

1. Curriculum Committee: Curriculum is a vital area of student concern. Its nature, its flexibility in adapting to current needs, and its effectiveness in achieving the aims to which Loyola aspires, can all, on our part, be seriously studied. We therefore advocate three students be included in the membership of this committee, representing Art, Commerce, and Science/Engineering.
2. Library Board: As a focal facility in a student's learning process, the student has a natural interest in the Library atmosphere and use, and in general the conditions which will provide for its maximum utility. Bearing this in mind, we propose that two student representatives sit on Library Board.
3. Committee on Academic Standing: What in actuality is the College's marking criteria? Are the present grading policies and procedures truly reflective of the student's ability and academic achievement? To measure and judge fairly the performance of an individual is a delicate task. As students, we believe, that we can provide valuable insights into the formulation of sound philosophy with respect to grading policies and their application. On the other hand, we recognize that student participation on this body will present many difficulties. On the basis of the foregoing, we propose to further solicit your ideas concerning how effective dialogue can be established as regards this vital area of concern.

D. DEPARTMENTS

We propose on a departmental level, the establishment of joint faculty-student committees. The dissimilar natures of Loyola's twenty departments will call for varying structures of student participation, in seeking to establish effective communication on all vital departmental matters. Representation in this area will be discussed with the individual departments.

CONCLUSION

We have presented here and in the preliminary paper our ideas and proposals concerning the extension of student participation within the structures of University Government.

We hope to further discuss with the members of the Loyola community our views on student representation. We hope that our proposals will receive your utmost attention.

Respectfully submitted by the Loyola of Montreal Students' Association.
October 13, 1967.

*Quotations are made "Representation: the Student Right and the Students Responsibility" a paper prepared by the Loyola of Montreal Students' Association, June, 1967.